

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRED C. IKLE
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

8 MARCH 1984

THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THANK YOU FOR INVITING US TO DISCUSS THE PRESIDENT'S STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE WITH YOU.

ALMOST A YEAR AGO, PRESIDENT REAGAN OFFERED A HOPEFUL VISION OF THE FUTURE, BASED ON A PROGRAM TO "COUNTER THE AWESOME SOVIET MISSILE THREAT WITH MEASURES THAT ARE DEFENSIVE." MANY AMERICANS WELCOMED THIS INITIATIVE, SENSING THAT IT COULD PROVIDE A ROAD TO ESCAPE FROM THE CONFRONTATION OF EVER-MORE DESTRUCTIVE MISSILES FORCES. BUT THERE WERE OTHERS WHO HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE INITIATIVE, AND SOME WHO ARE STILL STRONGLY OPPOSED TO IT.

SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE COME TOGETHER AT THIS TIME, THAT MADE THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE TIMELY:

- FIRST, THE CONTINUING GROWTH OF THE BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT FROM THE SOVIET UNION, THAT COULD FORCE UPON US EVER MORE DIFFICULT IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR OFFENSIVE FORCES FOR SECOND-STRIKE DETERRENCE.
- SECOND, ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGIES RELEVANT FOR BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE THAT REQUIRE US TO REASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF VARIOUS DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS.
- THIRD, THE SUBSTANTIAL, ONGOING SOVIET EFFORTS FOR BALLISTIC MISSILE AND AIR DEFENSE, IN PARTICULAR THE SOVIET RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES AND THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOW DEPLOYED A LARGE RADAR IN CENTRAL SIBERIA WHICH ALMOST CERTAINLY VIOLATES THE ABM TREATY.

CLEARLY, THE ROLE OF BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES MUST BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OVERALL MILITARY AND POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES. A DECISION TO DEPLOY BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES WOULD HAVE MAJOR IMPLICATIONS FOR NUCLEAR STRATEGY, THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, DETERRENCE OF AGGRESSION, AND ARMS REDUCTION. OUR POLICY ON MISSILE DEFENSES MUST BE SHAPED WITH THIS BROAD CONTEXT IN MIND. TO PERMIT INFORMED AND PRUDENT DECISIONS WE HAVE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON MANY ASPECTS OF THE RELEVANT TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOP A RANGE OF SPECIFIC CHOICES.

IT SEEMS PLAUSIBLE THAT COMPONENTS OF A MULTI-LAYERED DEFENSE COULD BECOME DEPLOYED EARLIER THAN A COMPLETE SYSTEM. SUCH INTERMEDIATE VERSIONS OF A BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM, WHILE UNABLE TO PROVIDE THE PROTECTION AVAILABLE FROM A COMPLETED MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM, MAY NEVERTHELESS OFFER USEFUL CAPABILITIES. A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES OPTIONS TO DEPLOY SUCH INTERMEDIATE CAPABILITIES WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT HEDGE AGAINST AN ACCELERATION IN THE SOVIET STRATEGIC BUILDUP. AND IF SUCH INTERMEDIATE SYSTEMS WERE ACTUALLY DEPLOYED, THEY COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN DEFEATING LIMITED NUCLEAR ATTACKS AND IN ENHANCING DETERRENCE AGAINST LARGE ATTACKS.

ONE OF THE CRITICISMS THAT HAS BEEN LEVELLED AGAINST BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE IS THE ALLEGATION THAT SUCH DEFENSES WOULD OVERTURN PRINCIPLES OF DETERRENCE THAT HAVE WORKED THROUGHOUT THE NUCLEAR AGE. THIS CRITICISM, MR. CHAIRMAN, IS BASED ON AMNESIA--FORGETTING THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE NUCLEAR AGE.

FOR THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE NUCLEAR ERA, THE UNITED STATES, HAVING A MONOPOLY, WAS INVULNERABLE TO NUCLEAR ATTACK. FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS, THE UNITED STATES MAINTAINED AN EXTENSIVE AIR DEFENSE NETWORK TO PROTECT NORTH AMERICA FROM ATTACK BY THE SOVIET BOMBER FORCES--THE ONLY SOVIET FORCES THEN THAT COULD HAVE REACHED THE UNITED STATES. DETERRENCE WORKED IN THAT PERIOD, AS SAFELY--INDEED, FAR MORE SAFELY-- THAN IN THE SUBSEQUENT PERIOD WHEN WE ABANDONED STRATEGIC DEFENSES.

IT IS ALSO WORTH NOTING THAT OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES WERE MORE CONFIDENT OF THE AMERICAN GUARANTEE DURING THE PERIOD WHEN WE DID HAVE STRATEGIC DEFENSES AND WERE LESS VULNERABLE TO SOVIET ATTACK, THAN DURING THE PRESENT PERIOD WHEN WE DO NOT HAVE DEFENSES AND ARE MUCH MORE VULNERABLE.

THE STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF AIR DEFENSES IN THE BOMBER ERA OF THE 1950'S ARE SIMILAR TO THE STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF MISSILE DEFENSES, INCLUDING THOSE THAT COULD BE DEPLOYED BEFORE A MORE EFFECTIVE MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM WOULD BE OPERATIONAL.

WHAT ARE THESE BENEFITS? US DEFENSE AGAINST BALLISTIC MISSILES WOULD REDUCE THE CONFIDENCE OF SOVIET PLANNERS IN DESIGNING AN ATTACK. THE SOVIET PLANNER COULD NOT PREDICT A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME. HIS WEAPONS MIGHT BE UNABLE TO REACH HIGH-PRIORITY TARGETS. DEFENSES COULD PROTECT US COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTERS, WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE SAFETY OF THE US DETERRENT POSTURE.

WE RECOGNIZE FULL WELL THAT THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT UNCERTAINTIES THAT WILL NOT BE RESOLVED UNTIL MORE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS, THE FUTURE ARMS POLICIES OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE PROSPECTS FOR ARMS REDUCTION AGREEMENTS, AND THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO US INITIATIVES. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED ARE: (1) THE ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF FUTURE US AND SOVIET DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS AND HOW THIS EFFECTIVENESS IS PERCEIVED BY EACH SIDE; (2) THE VULNERABILITIES OF THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS (BOTH REAL AND PERCEIVED); (3) THE SIZE, COMPOSITION, AND VULNERABILITIES OF EACH SIDE'S OFFENSIVE FORCES; AND (4) THE OVERALL US-SOVIET MILITARY BALANCE. WHILE THESE UNCERTAINTIES CANNOT BE FULLY RESOLVED, WE WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME. OUR ASSESSMENT OF THESE ISSUES SHOULD, OF COURSE, AFFECT OUR DESIGN AND DEPLOYMENT DECISIONS.

DESPITE THESE UNCERTAINTIES, A VIGOROUS R&D PROGRAM IS ESSENTIAL TO ASSESS AND PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR FUTURE BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES. AT A MINIMUM, SUCH A PROGRAM IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT BE FACED IN THE FUTURE WITH A ONE-SIDED SOVIET DEPLOYMENT OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES TO WHICH THE ONLY US ANSWER WOULD BE A FURTHER EXPANSION OF OUR OFFENSIVE FORCES, SUCH AS THE ADDITION OF PENETRATION AIDS AND MORE LAUNCHERS. SUCH A SITUATION WOULD BE FROUGHT WITH EXTREMELY GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR SECURITY AND THAT OF OUR ALLIES.

THERE IS NO BASIS FOR ASSUMING THAT DECISIONS ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS REST SOLELY WITH THE UNITED STATES. ON THE CONTRARY, SOVIET HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND PROGRAMS (INCLUDING AN ACTIVE

PROGRAM TO MODERNIZE THE EXISTING MOSCOW DEFENSE (THE ONLY OPERATIONAL BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE IN EXISTENCE) ALL INDICATE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE MORE LIKELY AND BETTER PREPARED THAN WE TO DEPLOY BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES WHENEVER THEY DEEM IT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE.

SINCE LONG-TERM SOVIET BEHAVIOR CANNOT RELIABLY BE PREDICTED, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO RESPOND FLEXIBLY. A US RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ON BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE THAT PROVIDES A VARIETY OF DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS WILL HELP RESOLVE THE MANY UNCERTAINTIES WE NOW CONFRONT, AND OVER TIME OFFERS US FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES. BY CONTRAST, WITHOUT THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, WE CONDEMN FUTURE US PRESIDENTS--AND FUTURE CONGRESSES--TO REMAIN LOCKED INTO THE PRESENT EXCLUSIVE EMPHASIS ON DETERRENCE THROUGH OFFENSIVE SYSTEMS ALONE. MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE, YOUR SUCCESSORS MIGHT DEEPLY REGRET IF YOU LEFT THEM WITHOUT ANY ALTERNATIVES TO COPE WITH NEW DANGERS, WITHOUT ALTERNATIVES TO RESPOND TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

OVER TIME, OUR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE MIGHT INDUCE A SHIFT IN SOVIET EMPHASIS FROM BALLISTIC MISSILES, WITH THE PROBLEMS THEY POSE FOR STABILITY, IN FAVOR OF AIR-BREATHING FORCES WITH SLOWER FLIGHT TIMES. BY CONSTRAINING SOVIET EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN OFFENSIVE FORCES (AND MAKING THEM MORE COSTLY), US OPTIONS TO DEPLOY BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES MIGHT INCREASE OUR LEVERAGE IN INDUCING THE SOVIETS TO AGREE TO MUTUAL REDUCTIONS IN OFFENSIVE NUCLEAR FORCES. IN TURN, SUCH REDUCTIONS

ULD REINFORCE THE POTENTIAL OF DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS TO STABILIZE
ERENCE. REDUCTIONS OF THE MAGNITUDE PROPOSED BY THE
ED STATES IN THE STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TALKS (START) WOULD
VERY EFFECTIVE IN THIS REGARD.

IN ITS INITIAL STAGES, A US BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE RESEARCH
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH EXISTING US
ATY OBLIGATIONS. WERE WE LATER TO DECIDE ON DEPLOYMENT OF A
ESPREAD DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, THE ABM TREATY WOULD HAVE
BE REVISED. IF THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
GRAM WARRANTED SUCH A DECISION IN THE FUTURE, IT WOULD BE
PROPRIATE TO ADDRESS IT IN THE CONTEXT OF A JOINT CONSIDERATION
OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. THIS WAS THE CONTEXT CONTEMPLATED
THE OUTSET OF THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS; BUT WHILE WE REACHED AN
EEMENT IN LIMITING DEFENSES, OUR ANTICIPATIONS OF ASSOCIATED
ITATIONS ON OFFENSIVE FORCES HAVE NOT BEEN REALIZED.

BOTH THE SOVIET NATIONAL INTEREST AND TRADITIONAL THEMES IN
IET STRATEGIC THOUGHT GIVE REASON TO EXPECT THAT THE SOVIETS
L RESPOND WITH AN INCREASED SHIFT TOWARD DEFENSIVE FORCES
ATIVE TO OFFENSIVE FORCES. THE NATURE OF A COOPERATIVE
SOVIET TRANSITION TO DEFENSIVE FORCES WOULD DEPEND ON MANY
FACTORS, INCLUDING THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF EACH SIDE'S DEFENSIVE
SYSTEMS, THEIR DEGREE OF SIMILARITY OR DISSIMILARITY, AND WHETHER
AND SOVIET SYSTEMS WOULD BE READY FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE SAME
PERIOD. BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT UNCERTAINTIES, NO DETAILED BLUE-
PRINT FOR ARMS CONTROL IN SUCH A TRANSITION PERIOD CAN BE DRAWN
THIS TIME. A LIST OF ARMS CONTROL MEASURES MIGHT INCLUDE
EED SCHEDULES FOR INTRODUCING THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS OF BOTH SIDES.

AND ASSOCIATED SCHEDULES FOR REDUCTIONS IN BALLISTIC MISSILES AND OTHER NUCLEAR FORCES. CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND CONTROLS ON DEVICES DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO ATTACK OR DEGRADE THE OTHER SIDE'S DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS ARE OTHER POTENTIAL ARMS CONTROL PROVISIONS.

IF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION DEPLOYED DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS AGAINST A RANGE OF NUCLEAR THREATS, IT WOULD NOT DIMINISH THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN US AND ALLIED CONVENTIONAL MILITARY CAPABILITIES. MOREOVER, IF THE UNITED STATES IN SUCH A FUTURE PERIOD DECIDED TO REALIZE THE PROTECTION OFFERED BY A FULLY EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC DEFENSE, WE WOULD ALSO REQUIRE AIR DEFENSES. THE INTEGRATION OF DEFENSES AGAINST AIR-BREATHING VEHICLES WITH DEFENSES AGAINST BALLISTIC MISSILES REQUIRES FURTHER STUDY.

DEFENSE AGAINST BALLISTIC MISSILES OFFERS NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR ENHANCED DETERRENCE OF DELIBERATE ATTACK, GREATER SAFETY AGAINST ACCIDENTAL USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR UNINTENDED NUCLEAR ESCALATION, AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND SCOPE FOR ARMS CONTROL. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE POSSIBILITIES CAN BE REALIZED WILL DEPEND ON HOW OUR PRESENT UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY, COSTS, AND SOVIET RESPONSE ARE RESOLVED.

THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF THE US STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE IS TO DIMINISH THE RISK OF NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION. IN CONTRAST WITH CONTINUED, SOLE RELIANCE ON THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR RETALIATION, THE PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE FOR A SAFER, LESS MENACING WAY OF PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR IN THE DECADES TO COME.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE WILL HAVE NOTED THAT SOME OF THE MOST FERVENT OPPOSITION TO BALLISTIC MISSILES DEFENSES IS IDEOLOGICAL. THAT IS TO SAY, IT IS NOT BASED ON FACTS, BUT ON FIXED BELIEFS. ANY PROPOSED REVISION OF THIS BELIEF IS ATTACKED AS HERESY, ANY INTERNAL INCONSISTENCIES OF THE BELIEF ARE IGNORED. THUS, YOU MAY HAVE ONE AND THE SAME PERSON

- ONE, APPLAUD THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION BECAUSE IT PROHIBITS OFFENSIVE USE OF BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS, WHILE DEFENSES ARE PERMITTED;
- TWO, OPPOSE BINARY CHEMICAL WEAPONS FOR DETERRENCE, BUT SUPPORT DEFENSIVE CHEMICAL WARFARE EQUIPMENT; AND
- THREE, TURN THESE RULES UPSIDE DOWN FOR NUCLEAR ARMS, BY SUPPORTING OFFENSIVE ARMS BUT OPPOSING DEFENSIVE ONES.

THE IDEOLOGICAL OPPONENTS TO NUCLEAR DEFENSE ALSO SEEM TO FORGET THAT THE BASIC PREMISE OF BANNING MISSILE DEFENSES HAS BEEN DISPROVEN. THE PREMISE WAS, THAT THE PROHIBITION OF SUCH DEFENSES WOULD PERMIT US TO CURB THE GROWTH IN OFFENSIVE ARMS. BUT AFTER THE ABM TREATY THE SOVIET OFFENSIVE BUILD-UP CONTINUED AS IF THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE.

A CURIOUS ASPECT OF THE IDEOLOGY AGAINST MISSILE DEFENSES IS THE NOTION THAT OUTER SPACE MUST BE RESERVED FOR OFFENSIVE MISSILES, SO THAT THEY CAN TRAVEL WITHOUT OBSTRUCTION TO CREATE HOLOCAUST ON EARTH. THE IDEOLOGY DEMANDS A SANCTUARY IN OUTER SPACE THAT EXCLUDES ANY PROTECTION FOR THE CITIES WE LIVE IN, BUT OFFERS A FREE RIDE FOR THE MISSILES THAT COULD DESTROY OUR CITIES.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, IN REACTING TO THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE, AND IN VARIOUS OPINION POLLS, HAVE ALREADY SHOWN THAT THEY DO NOT AGREE WITH THESE IDEOLOGUES. THEY ARE MORE PRAGMATIC. THEY SUPPORT AN INITIATIVE THAT OFFERS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. THEY DO NOT WISH TO PRESERVE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION THE PRESENT NIGHTMARE OF HUGE AND UNIMPEDED MISSILE FORCES, CONSTANTLY POISED FOR MASS DESTRUCTION.